

# "Classic" Caramel Sauce

*Swick*

Makes 1 cup | Active Time: 25 minutes | Total Time: 35 minutes

## Step 1: Caramelizing the Sugar

- 1 cup cane sugar
- 3/4 cup water

NOTE: IF YOU HAVE NOT MADE CARAMEL SAUCE BEFORE, PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL. THE SUGAR IS EXTREMELY HOT AND CAN CAUSE SEVERE BURNS. Read the notes below if you have never made caramel sauce before.

Sugar Note: Most chefs say that only granulated sugar can be successfully caramelized; other sugars — such as brown sugar and unrefined sugar such as cane sugar — contain impurities that can inhibit caramelization. It's those impurities that can burn before the sugar has time to caramelize. Adding a liquid, such as water, will help to mitigate this problem. That being said, it can be a little tricky when working with sugar, so don't get frustrated.

Combine the sugar and water in a medium saucepan over medium to low heat and bring to a boil. Boil for 10 to 15 minutes or until the sugar caramelizes and turns golden brown. Do not stir the mixture as the sugar heats or it can start to crystallize. Instead, gently tilt and/or swirl the pan side-to-side to ensure the sugar cooks and colors evenly.

## Step 2: Adding the Coconut Cream & Flavorings

- 1 cup full-fat coconut milk (1-14 oz can)
- 1/2 to 1 tsp fleur de sel (optional)
- 1 to 2 pieces lemon zest (optional)

Note: Use only the thick coconut cream from the surface of the can. You may find it easier to separate the thick cream from the coconut water by placing the can of coconut milk in the refrigerator overnight.

Once the sugar is golden, immediately remove from the heat and carefully whisk in the coconut cream. Wear oven mitts and be very careful. The cold cream will splatter when it hits the hot sugar. The sugar may also clump a bit, but don't worry, simply keep whisking until the sugar has been fully incorporated into the coconut cream.

At this point, the caramel sauce is ready to be used. If using as is, let cool slightly before using as it is still extremely hot.

- 1 can coconut milk
- 1/2 palm sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp sea salt, or to taste
- 1/4 pure maple syrup

To make this simpler caramel sauce, combine the coconut milk, palm sugar, and maple syrup in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan. Place over medium heat and bring to a gentle boil. Immediately reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes.

Whisk in the vanilla and salt and remove from the heat.

Allow the Caramel Sauce to cool for at least 20 minutes before serving. The sauce will continue to thicken slightly as it cools. This is not a super thick caramel sauce and it can be served warm, at room temperature or cold.

Store, covered and refrigerated, for up to 1 week.

## **Chef's Notes**

When you caramelize sugar be sure to give it your undivided attention. It can turn from clear liquid to burnt caramel in a matter of seconds. At 350°F, it is also very hot and can cause severe burning if it splatters on your skin. Also, make sure your pan and utensils are very clean because any food particles could cause the sugar to crystallize.

To prevent crystallization you can add an interfering agent; just a tiny amount of acid will do, such as cream of tartar or a drop of lemon juice. Don't be intimidated, even experienced chefs sometimes burn the caramel or have the sugar crystallize.

If you are new to making caramel sauce, it's a good idea to keep a deep bowl of water with lots of ice in it nearby. If some caramel lands on your hand, immediately put your hand right into the ice bath. It's also a good idea to wear an oven mitt, especially when adding the coconut cream.